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MODEL BUILDING AS A HOBBY

By CHARLES BANGERT, Jr.



National winners in the 1937 Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild model competitions at the award dinner. Left to right are: O. G. Backey, E. F. Sendek, the author, T. Mandel, C. F. Kettering, W. S. Knudsen, and Mr. Fisher.

TODAY the educational system is faced with the responsibility of teaching adults, as well as adolescents, how to utilize their leisure, an added burden resulting directly from the shortened work-week and elimination of child labor. Along this line schools throughout the country are stressing all types of sports and more recently, for those who are not so sport conscious, industrial arts. It is under the latter that we may classify hobbies, a hobby being an engrossing topic, plan, handicraft, or interest to which one constantly reverts during his spare time. Probably the hobby which interests the greatest number of people and also receives the most publicity is model building.

Model building is a handicraft hobby in which young and old alike may indulge with great self satisfaction and pleasure. It is likewise a hobby in which the poor as well as the rich can become equally proficient. It is probably due to these facts that model building is playing an ever increasing role in our social set up. For the past few years it has taken the spot light in hobby shows sponsored throughout the nation. A number of magazines now appear on the nation's news stands devoted entirely to model building in its various phases. The handicraft hobbies, as we have them today, owe their well-being to many factors. The Boy Scouts of America, 4-H Clubs, the Rotary Clubs' Hobby Shows, schools, Children's Hospitals, Model Railroad Builders' Clubs, Model Flying Clubs, and the CCC are some of the main agencies. However, the greatest single factor, without a doubt, has been the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild.

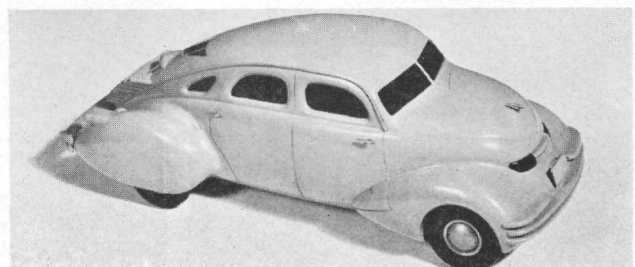
This General Motors Educational Foundation was organized by General Motors to encourage youths in a study of the crafts and designed to supplement the work of the nation's schools. It was created in recog-

nition of industry's responsibility to society, with a view to the fact that craftsmanship—despite all that has been said of the machine age—is of more importance today than ever before, and a knowledge of the definite need which exists for men who can couple manual dexterity with technical training and creative ability. It accomplished its purpose by sponsoring model coach-building competitions among boys of "teen" age, in which \$5,000 university scholarships form the major awards. The success of the movement may be judged by the growth of the organization, to a membership of more than 1,400,000 and the fact that some 2,000 secondary schools have approved its activities.

With the splendid record of the Guild before them, officials of General Motors decided to broaden the scope of the work being conducted, with the result that a competition in creative design was announced in 1937. Original motor car designs represented by models constructed of wood, or any other material capable of withstanding the handling required in shipping and judging, were sought in this competition as a means of developing the creative genius of American youths.

The only limitations imposed upon those participating

The author's winning model



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in the model car design competition were practical in nature. It was stipulated that models submitted must be constructed to a scale of one inch to one foot and conform to the designated length, height and width, so that an actual car built to the same specifications would have sufficient head room, leg room and breadth to accommodate five or six persons comfortably. This model car competition literally swept the country. Secondary schools in Detroit, Akron, Chicago and elsewhere adopted the project for study in shop, mechanical drawing and art classes, giving curricular credit to those completing the problem. It was even instituted in college art classes. The miniature automobiles submitted were judged on originality of design and artistic merit, proportion and balance, workmanship, paint and color application, practicability and scale fidelity.

The coach-building competition, on the other hand, was chiefly a craft project. Participants reproduced the famous Napoleonic coach, in design a composite of the ornate vehicles used for the wedding and coronation of the Emperor Napoleon. The construction of this coach trains youths in four phases of craftsmanship, since the excellence of the metalcraft, paintcraft, woodcraft and trimcraft, as well as fidelity to scale, governed the score.

The author, being an advertent model builder, participated in the model car competition in 1937 with startling results. He won the grand award that year with a little 18 inch model made primarily of cheese boxes. It was a four door sedan with the motor in the rear. The semblance of a hood left in front, he stipulated, should house an air-conditioning unit. Considering the body shape in general it had a bulbous front and sloping lines to the rear where it flattened out into a beaver like tail. The sloping lines gave it the appearance of being in full speed away from its nitch. The beaver like tail, in reality, was a pyramided stack of broad flat flutes, which provided an adequate outlet for the motor's cooling system as well as the air-conditioning system. These flutes lent a mysterious air to the model and were designed to build up a vacuum, when the car was in motion, in such a fashion as to aid in moving air through the motor's cooling system. The front bumper was of the built-in type, above which was located a small grilled intake opening for the air-conditioning system. This opening extended between the head lights and blended into the scheme of things. The model was entirely inclosed underneath for two purposes, first, to reduce wind resistance and second, to give the skin-breather its maximum intake capacity, especially at high speeds. The skin-breather was of the airplane type. It functioned as an intake for the motor's cooling system and was located just beneath the rear seat. By placing the air-conditioning unit well in the front he overcame one of the biggest objections to a rear motored car, namely the loss of traction in the front wheels when going around curves at high speeds.

The model was painted a sage green as this color is easy on the eyes. The whole model was designed with but two main ideas, simplicity of line and compactness of arrangement.

The author feels that model building, as a hobby, is not just a fad, which has swept the country, but a well established and ever growing pastime. It is evident that this method of using leisure time gives in return a fuller, richer and happier life along with an education which cannot otherwise be obtained. Already it has affected the lives of millions and in some cases has brought the peoples of different countries closer together. Accordingly, it would be foolish to assume that such a factor will not increase in importance with time.
